

National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC)

NDIC	FY 2005 Requested	FY 2005 Final	FY 2006 Requested	FY 2006 Enacted	FY 2007 Request
AGENCY TOTAL*	\$34.9	\$39.4	\$17	\$39	\$15.85

* in millions.

Contact Information: National Drug Intelligence Center Public Affairs: 814–532–4902, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic>.

The committee supports the administration’s request for \$15,852,000 to fund the shutdown of the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) and the transfer of its functions to other agencies. Although the goals of NDIC are worthy—the analysis of drug intelligence and the gathering of information from local law enforcement—it is not clear that the separate existence of the Center is necessary. Currently funded at \$39 million for fiscal year 2006, NDIC is an expensive and duplicative use of scarce Federal drug enforcement resources.¹

The Center is located in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and has a staff of nearly 400 employees. First created in 1993, it has cost the American taxpayers nearly \$400 million. From the beginning, the agency was criticized as duplicative of already-existing drug intelligence centers (such as the DEA’s El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) along the southwest border). Critics also questioned why a Federal intelligence center would be physically located so far from every other Federal drug enforcement agency.²

In fact, NDIC was never able to fulfill its original mission of centralizing and coordinating drug intelligence, given its remote location and the unwillingness of the other Federal agencies to contribute significant information. Instead, over time the Center took on two different missions: analysis of “open source” (i.e., publicly available) information already published by other drug enforcement agencies and the development of software capable of analyzing documents seized by other agencies (particularly state and local agencies).³

Though these missions are acknowledged as having some marginal value by other Federal agencies, as well as drug policy analysts, it is not clear whether they alone justify the continued separate existence of NDIC or its location in Johnstown. Moreover, the Center has been plagued by scandal. Its director was fired in 2004 by the Justice Department for inappropriately taking nearly \$164,000 in official trips with his secretary.⁴

The committee agrees that the Center’s work has value, but also agrees with the administration’s assessment that the current funding is excessive, and that the separate Johnstown facility is unnecessary. In a time of shrinking budgets, it makes a great deal of sense to consolidate the existing resources and functions of NDIC within other agencies. For example, the true intelligence-gathering personnel and functions of the Center should be relocated to the southwest border at EPIC or within the new drug fusion center established by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

¹ Though the administration has repeatedly proposed closing the Center, Congress has continued to fund it through an earmark in the Intelligence Community Management Account, part of the annual Department of Defense appropriations bill. Although appropriated on that bill, the funds have been directed to be transferred to the Department of Justice, which Congress has made responsible for managing the Center.

² Bret Schulte, *A Drug War Boondoggle*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, (May 9, 2005).

³ Id.

⁴ Id.